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Team Nutrition

Getting It Started and
Keeping It Going

A Guide
For Team Nutrition Leaders



“We have a responsibility to promote knowledge, attitudes and behaviors among our school children that will develop eating patterns that improve health, intellectual development, and overall quality of life, today and into the future. To achieve this change, students, their parents and teachers, school officials, community and business leaders, and local, State, and Federal program administrators must be actively involved in ensuring that school environments promote healthy eating patterns.”

– U.S. Department of Agriculture

United States Department of Agriculture
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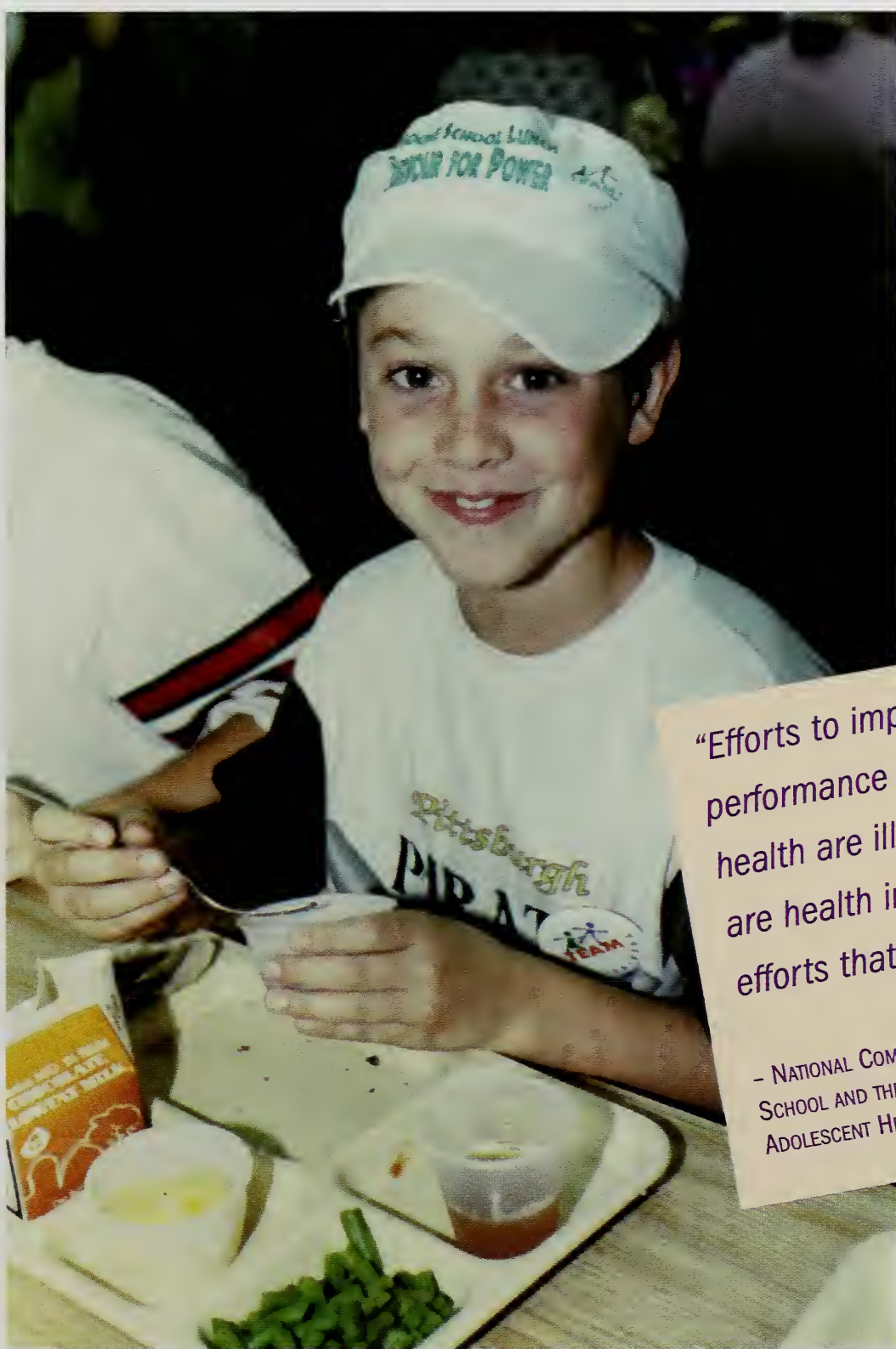


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Welcome!

If you've received this guide, you are either new to Team Nutrition or you have been involved in Team Nutrition for a while and are ready to build on your successes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service is providing this new tool to help you get Team Nutrition started in your school or to recharge your enthusiasm for taking the next steps.



"Efforts to improve school performance that ignore health are ill-conceived, as are health improvement efforts that ignore education."

— NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY IN IMPROVING ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Welcome

Team Nutrition—Getting It Started

Team Nutrition—Keeping It Going

Why is Team Nutrition so important?

Because it can help your school—and the Nation—reverse an alarming trend. Many of our children have an unhealthy lifestyle. Research has shown that our children are not making healthy eating choices or getting enough physical activity, and overweight is a serious problem.

- Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions. The percentage of children who are overweight in the United States has more than doubled during the past two decades and the percentage among adolescents has tripled.¹
- The most immediate consequence of overweight as perceived by the children themselves is social discrimination. This is associated with poor self-esteem and depression.²
- Teenagers today drink twice as much soda as milk.³

- Only 2 percent of youth meet all the serving recommendations in the Food Guide Pyramid.⁴
- In a typical day, 33 percent of kids watch TV for more than three hours.⁵
- Studies of young persons have found that television watching is directly associated with obesity.⁶
- Nearly 31 percent of high school students get insufficient amounts of physical activity.⁷

Research also clearly reveals a link between nutrition and fitness, good health, and the ability to learn. This means that the **food and physical activity choices children make now can affect their academic achievement today and their productivity as adults.**



photo credit: The Food Trust

You may find a profile of the nutrition and health behaviors of the children in your State at the following Web sites:

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/tools/profiles.htm

What can we do to help?

- Show children how they can improve their eating patterns and physical activity by making small and gradual changes.
- Make changes in school policy and environment to support healthy lifestyle choices.
- Provide opportunities for children to practice a healthy lifestyle.
- Deliver consistent nutrition and physical activity messages through the school, classroom, cafeteria, home, community, and media.



Team Nutrition was created to translate these ideas into reality.



About Team Nutrition

In 1995, the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children regulations updated nutrition standards to ensure that school meals are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. USDA recognized that schools needed help to put the rules into action. They needed technical assistance to help foodservice personnel

create healthy appealing meals and nutrition education to motivate students to select and eat the healthier meals.

So, Team Nutrition was born—an integrated, behavior-based, comprehensive plan for promoting the nutritional health of the Nation's children.



How does Team Nutrition work?

Team Nutrition uses three behavior-oriented strategies:

Provide training and technical assistance to help Child Nutrition Programs foodservice professionals:

- Plan and prepare healthy meals that look good, meet nutrition standards, and appeal to taste and cultural preferences.
- Link Child Nutrition Programs with other nutrition and health-related school programs and activities, and use the school cafeteria as a learning center.
- Practice sound financial accountability in Child Nutrition Programs operations.

Provide multifaceted, integrated nutrition education for children, their parents, and other adults who influence children's behavior:

- Deliver consistent Team Nutrition messages:
 - ▶ Eat a variety of foods,
 - ▶ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and grains
 - ▶ Eat lower fat foods more often and
 - ▶ Be physically active.
- Reinforce the messages through the school, classroom, cafeteria, home, community, and media.

Build school and community support:

- Encourage schools to adopt policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- Provide educational materials to help schools achieve success.
- Promote a school and community environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity.

Team Nutrition's success in carrying out these strategies depends on partnerships among Federal, State, and local agencies that administer Child Nutrition Programs. Team Nutrition schools—schools that make a commitment to improving the health and education of their children by promoting healthy eating choices and creative nutrition education—are the focal points at the local level.

"Schools and communities have a shared responsibility for providing children access to high quality foods and positive nutrition experiences that will have a lifelong impact on their health and education."

— THE AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

What resources does Team Nutrition provide?

Since 1995, Team Nutrition has been working to develop an array of resources – such as newsletters, publications, videos, CD's, Web sites – to support each of these strategies. There are now

- a variety of training and technical assistance materials for Child Nutrition Programs' foodservice personnel;
- nutrition curricula for elementary and middle schools;
- a colorful, lively, and informative assortment of nutrition education materials to reach children at home, at school, at childcare centers, and in the community; and
- materials that Team Nutrition leaders and others can use to promote a healthy environment throughout the school.

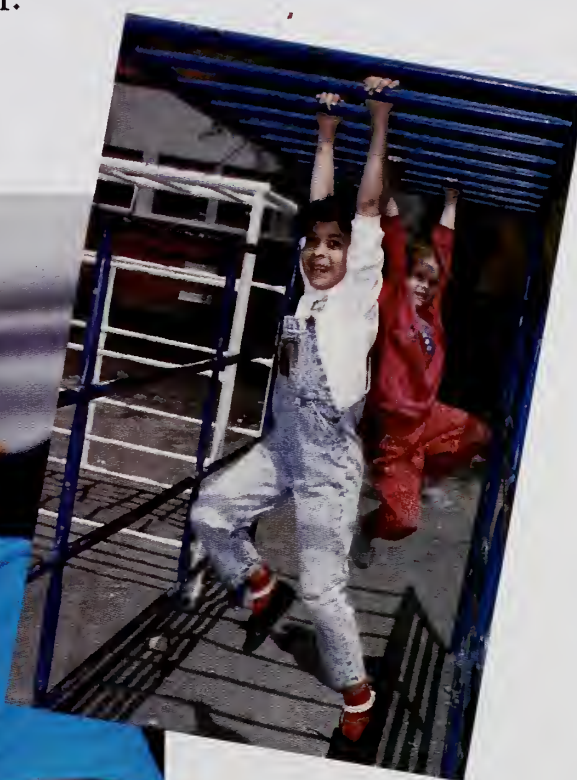
Team Nutrition has also issued training grants and conducted a Team Nutrition Pilot Study. In addition, it created a Team Nutrition Demonstration Project to allow States and schools to experiment with the USDA materials, create new ones, and develop methods for starting and sustaining Team Nutrition activities that work in their unique schools and communities. In the 2000-2002 school years, 61 schools in 4 States participated in the Team Nutrition Demonstration Project. They recorded the steps, time and resources they needed to develop and sustain Team Nutrition in their schools. They also recorded the obstacles they encountered, the solutions they developed, and the lessons they learned. Some of their experiences are included in this guide. To review the executive summary or full Demonstration Project report, visit the web site: www.fns.usda.gov/oane.



About This Guide

If you are a new Team Nutrition School, this guide introduces you to Team Nutrition and all the wonderful resources that are now available to help you get Team Nutrition started and keep it going. If your school is already participating, the guide can help you review Team Nutrition's goals, take another look at the Team Nutrition materials on your shelves, order new ones, and revitalize your efforts to help children be healthy and physically active.

Find out if there is already a nutrition team in your school, such as a school nutrition advisory council or existing school health council. You can incorporate Team Nutrition's goals as a new set of tasks for an existing team, or build a new team.



Getting It Started

The section, “TEAM NUTRITION—Getting It Started,” focuses on critical first steps.

First Steps



1. Identify Team Nutrition Leader(s)



2. Create a Team



3. Get Buy-In



4. Assess Your School's Needs



5. Use Available Resources



6. Develop a Work Plan



7. Ask for Feedback



8. Celebrate and Share Success

In both sections you will find real-world challenges and solutions, tips and ideas, activities and events from the schools that participated in the 2000-2002 Team Nutrition Demonstration Project.

Keeping It Going

The section, “TEAM NUTRITION—Keeping It Going,” provides how to's, ideas in action, and available resources for adding to your current activities. It emphasizes delivering healthy eating and physical activity information through six channels.

Six Channels



School



Classroom



Cafeteria



Home



Community



Media

If you are new to Team Nutrition, USDA welcomes you to the team. If you are already a team member, we invite you to renew your commitment. Together, we can make a big difference—in children's energy and readiness to learn today; in their health and productivity as adults; and in their success and well being throughout their lives.

Getting It Started

There are many ways to start Team Nutrition in your school. To stimulate your thinking, here are the eight key steps Team Nutrition Demonstration

Project school leaders identified for launching Team Nutrition successfully. This section also highlights the resources that are available to help you.



1. Identify Team Nutrition Leader(s)

The role of a Team Nutrition Leader is to create a vision of what Team Nutrition can accomplish in the school and the community, and to inspire others to help achieve that vision. To be effective, the Team Nutrition leader must have the commitment, leadership ability, time and

energy to coordinate the effort. Once a team is assembled, the leader must guide the group and keep the momentum going. If you need to share the leadership responsibilities, you may consider having co-leaders.





2. Create a Team

Find out if there is already a nutrition team in your school, such as a school nutrition advisory council or existing school health council. You can incorporate Team Nutrition's goals as a new set of tasks for an existing team, or build a new team.

The team leader will want to recruit individuals who share a commitment to improving children's nutrition and are enthusiastic, creative and energetic. Candidates might include:

- **Principal or assistant principal** – You will need the principal's support to be successful, so be sure to invite him or her to be on the team. If the principal is unable to be a regular team member, invite him or her to attend your planning meetings.
- **Foodservice manager** – The foodservice manager or other foodservice professional can be the Team Nutrition leader or a team member. Foodservice staff can also serve as nutrition educators, both in the cafeteria and the classroom.

Tips from Team Nutrition Demonstration Project Schools

- Use bulletin boards, e-mails, and event calendars for communicating among team members.

- **Teachers** – Be sure to include at least one teacher on your team. Teachers, including family and consumer science teachers and physical education teachers, are strong role models for students. Involving several of them with Team Nutrition encourages them to communicate with each other and to teach nutrition and physical activity regularly in their classrooms.
- **Coordinators of the school health council** – If your school has a school health council, ask the council to adopt goals that are related to healthy eating and physical activity. Invite a member of the council to be on your team—and be sure to collaborate on activities that promote nutrition and physical activity.



- **Parents** – A parent may serve as a team leader or be a member of the team. A parent member can urge other parents to focus on nutrition and health issues, help their own children learn to make healthy food and physical activity choices, volunteer to plan and conduct nutrition activities in the school, and serve on the nutrition advisory council.
- **School board members** – Attend a school board meeting to talk about the link between education, nutrition, physical activity – and about Team Nutrition. Then invite a school board member to serve on your team.
- **Extension educators** – These specialists have an educational network in the community for providing services in the areas of health, nutrition, youth development, economic development, and family life. They can be valuable additions to your team. Many extension professionals have expertise in coalition building and strategic planning. They may help you establish your team, develop goals, strategies and plans. They may also teach a lesson in the classroom, organize a health fair for the school or the entire community, or conduct other activities.

- **School nurses** – School nurses are familiar with the school system and can contribute much expertise to the team. Invite them to conduct health-related activities for students, parents, teachers, and community members.
- **Dietitians and nutritionists** – These nutrition professionals understand the nutrition and health issues in your community. Invite them to be part of the team.

Be creative and flexible—there are many enthusiastic and competent people in your community who would be happy to be members of your team.



Tips from Team Nutrition Demonstration Project Schools

- Get parents, community members and schools administrators involved.



3. Get Buy-In

The 2000-2002 Team Nutrition Demonstration Project schools found that getting buy-in is crucial to assuring successful Team Nutrition results. They also found that **Team Nutrition is a win-win situation—everyone who participated gained from the experience.** As you talk to the individuals and audiences you want to involve, remind them to keep their eyes on the prize: well-nourished children are healthier and learn better. And remember to highlight the benefits of Team Nutrition participation that would be of particular interest to them. For example, the Team Nutrition Demonstration Project schools identified the following benefits for these potential team members:

Administrators (for example, principal and school board members)

- Team Nutrition promotes good nutrition—to the health of their students **and** for their academic achievement.
- Team Nutrition activities and events generate positive media and community attention—good public relations.
- Team Nutrition promotes collaboration and teamwork among parents, students, teachers, and foodservice staff.
- With the child obesity issue getting so much national attention, supporting Team Nutrition is a good way for administrators and board members to show that they are responsive to this major issue.

- Team Nutrition helps students learn about healthy choices and get excited about good nutrition.

Teachers

- Team Nutrition provides innovative resources that help teachers present nutrition in a variety of creative ways.
- Team Nutrition encourages teachers to integrate food and nutrition into reading, writing, math, science and other lessons—which captures the interest of the children.
- Team Nutrition increases teachers' awareness that healthier students learn better.

Foodservice staff

- Team Nutrition makes the foodservice staff part of the school team, which brings them recognition, self-confidence, and more professional status.
- Team Nutrition provides opportunities for foodservice staff to work with teachers on nutrition education projects or food demonstrations for students.
- Team Nutrition provides technical assistance and training in nutrition and food preparation—and often, college credit or American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) certification hours for their training.
- Team Nutrition encourages the foodservice staff to change school menus and create a new look in the cafeteria—which improves students' and parents' attitudes about school meals.

Parents

- Team Nutrition gives parents ideas for preparing healthier snacks and meals at home, and other information to help children make better food choices.
- Team Nutrition encourages parents to enjoy meals at school with their children.
- Team Nutrition gives children enough information to teach their parents about the importance of healthy eating.

Community (for example extension educators, school nurses, dietitians and nutritionists, local businesses and organizations)

- Team Nutrition allows community members to get to know school staff and get involved in school events and activities.
- Team Nutrition introduces students, parents, teachers, foodservice staff, and administrators to many businesses and organizations in the community.
- Team Nutrition delivers consistent nutrition messages throughout the community.





4. Assess Your School's Needs

Before making plans to begin Team Nutrition in your school:

Look for data on the education and health status of students in the nation and in your State. You can compare the status of your students with students across the country. See the following Web sites:

Obesity/overweight:

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/

Physical inactivity:

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs

Diabetes:

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/statistics/index.htm

You may also find useful data at this USDA's Community Nutrition map site at:
<http://www.barc.usda.gov/bhnrc/cnrg/cnmapfr.htm>

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS): statistical information about the behaviors affecting children's healthy development and academic achievement.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/index.htm>.

School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS): a national survey conducted periodically by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assess school health policies and programs at the State, district, school, and classroom levels. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/shpps/index.htm>.

Contact your State's departments of education and health about current policies on nutrition and health. They can provide a Web site or other resources for obtaining policy information.

Identify existing nutrition and physical activity efforts that are already underway in your school. Then you can develop a plan to fill the gaps. The following Web sites provide you with assessment tools to help you learn about your school's climate for nutritional health and strategies to improve it.

School Health Index (SHI): a self-assessment and school health-planning guide developed by CDC for elementary, middle and high schools. This resource is available at CDC's Web site <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/SHI/index.htm>.

Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment: a simplified version of the SHI school nutrition environment Improvement Checklist is included in this kit. It is a great tool for helping you get started. You can order Changing the Scene at this Web site <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/changing.html>.



5. Use Available Resources

Time and funding are both critical to your Team Nutrition effort. It is important to make the best use of available resources.

Apply for grants

Team Nutrition Training Grants: these USDA grants offer funding to State agencies that administer National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program. They help States establish or enhance sustainable State and local infrastructures for Team Nutrition. Many State agencies offer competitive sub-grants or mini grants to local schools to implement Team

Tips from Team Nutrition Demonstration Project Schools

- Incorporate Team Nutrition events and activities into existing programs, if possible.
- Network with other schools—share successful ideas.

Nutrition. To find out whether or not your state received a TN grant, go to www.fns.usda.gov/TeamNutrition/Grants/index.htm.



Collaborate with organizations that conduct school or community programs that address child nutrition and health:

School Improvement: the Title I program, funded by the US Department of Education, is the largest elementary and secondary education program and supplements State and local funding for low-achieving children, especially in high-poverty schools. The program finances the additional academic support and learning opportunities that are often required to help disadvantaged students progress along with their classmates.

www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbreference/page_pg4.html#titlei.

Character Education: this Title V program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, supports States in working with school districts to develop curricula materials, provide teacher training, involve parents in character education and integrate character education into the curriculum.

www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbreference/page_pg41.html#v-d3.

Action for Healthy Kids: A nationwide initiative dedicated to improving the health and educational performance of children through better nutrition and physical activity in schools.
www.ActionforHealthykids.org.

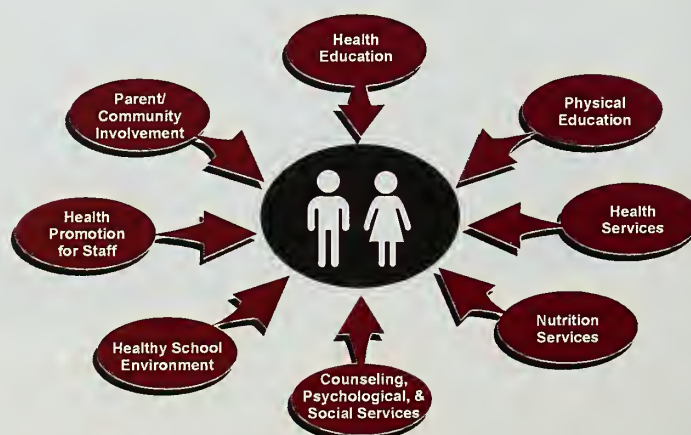


21st Century Community Learning Program (CCLP): this Title IV program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is a key component of President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. It gives students and their families an opportunity to continue to learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended. Nutrition and physical activities can be part of the enrichment programs offered in afterschool programs.
www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbreference/page_pg31.html#titleiv.

Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP): this program, funded by CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, supports State education agencies work with State health departments to promote coordinated school health in their States, with a particular focus on promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and a tobacco-free lifestyle. Team Nutrition strategies fit the eight CSHP interactive components: Health Education, Physical Education, Health Services, Nutrition Services, Health Promotion for Staff, Counseling and Psychological Services, Healthy School Environment, and Parent and Community Involvement.
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/about/school_health.htm.

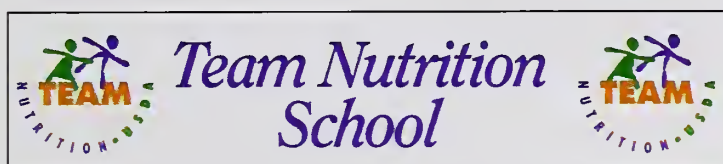
To find out if your State agency receives funding for a Coordinated School Health Program, www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/partners/state_directors.htm.

A Coordinated School Health Program

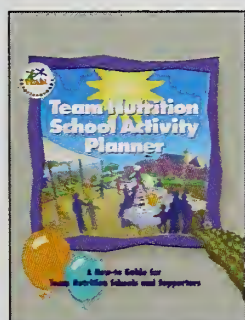


Use the Start-Up Kit for New Team Nutrition Schools that USDA created to help jump-start your efforts. The kit is FREE when you sign on as a Team Nutrition school. (Encourage other schools to enroll, go to www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Join/index.htm.)

Currently, the kit includes these nutrition education materials:

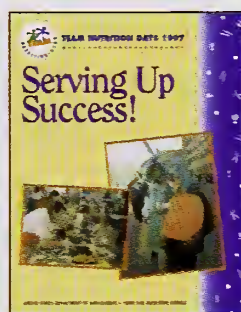


Team Nutrition School Banner: a colorful plastic banner that can be displayed to announce a school's commitment to the goals of Team Nutrition and the health of the students.



Team Nutrition Activity Planner: a guide designed to involve community supporters of Team Nutrition with school Team Nutrition leaders in planning activities. It includes activity suggestions

and reproducible materials that can be customized, copied and distributed to children and parents. You may download this planner at USDA's Team Nutrition Web site www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/activityplanner.html.



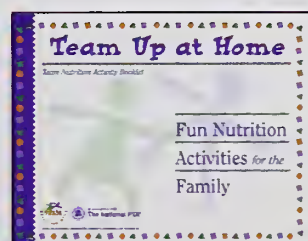
Serving up Success: a booklet that features nutrition education activities created by schools across the country. You can download it free at USDA's Team Nutrition Web site www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/serving.html.



Fun Tips: Using the Dietary Guidelines at Home: easy-to-follow tips for parents and teachers to use with children. You can reproduce the copy or download it free at USDA's Team Nutrition Web site www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/funtips.html.



Team Nutrition Connections: newsletters developed by USDA for Team Nutrition schools and supporters. www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/connections7.html.



Team Up at Home – Team Nutrition Activity Booklet: a variety of activities for parents and elementary school children to do at home. (This booklet is being revised.)

Posters: several age-appropriate posters that promote healthy eating.



Food, Family and Fun Resource Book: a recipe and activity book for middle and high school students and their families.

Promotional materials: items for students—such as bookmarks, stickers and book covers—that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Additional resources



USDA's Team Nutrition Web Site: the Team Nutrition Web site is your home for Team Nutrition ideas and success stories. Bookmark USDA's Team

Nutrition Web site and visit it often to receive updated materials and information about Team Nutrition training grants at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/.

Good Stuff from Other States: you can access State agencies' Child Nutrition Program Web sites to see what other States are doing with the Child Nutrition Programs and Team Nutrition, and what materials they have developed. <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/States/state.html>.

In addition, some States have created their own Team Nutrition Web sites. Look for them at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Links/index.htm.



6. Develop a Work Plan

After your team has assessed the needs in your school, decided where to build on existing strengths and where to create new activities, and researched potential partners and other resources, you are ready to plan and schedule specific action steps, programs, and events. As Team Nutrition Demonstration Project Schools discovered, preparing a written plan is more important than frequent meetings for carrying out events and activities. You may want to consider creating an event planner that shows

- Tips from Team Nutrition Demonstration Project Schools**
- Keep your plan “do-able”—start slow and build on the base.
 - Have an annual Team Nutrition kickoff to keep the momentum going.
 - Don’t take on too many activities at once.

dates, Team Nutrition messages, activities, and communication channels. For example:

Date	Messages	Project/activity title	Communication channels
Fall	Eat a variety of foods	“A visit behind the serving line”- the school foodservice manager and staff will conduct a “behind the serving wall” tour for Mrs. Johnson’s 4th graders. Students will observe a variety of foods and equipment and see the procedures for producing quantity foods. Students will also learn about appropriate hand washing. At a mealtime shortly after the tour, foodservice staff can plan and prepare meals using the specific machines or procedures students saw on the tour to help students make connection between foods and how they are prepared.	Cafeteria and classroom (health unit)
Winter	Eat a variety of foods	“Healthy Advertising”- with guidance from teachers, elementary students will produce “commercials” about nutrition topics, to be shown to the community via the district’s cable channel.	School wide, classroom, community, media
Spring	Eat more fruits, vegetables and grains	“Discover the world of food and books”- after studying nutrition concepts and developing age-appropriate activities, family and consumer science students will conduct Nutrition Book Fairs for pre-K and kindergarten students at ABC elementary school. Students will sample the vegetables and fruits and grains they studied.	School wide and classroom

Here is an example of an action steps form that can be used to carry out your work plan

Time and location	Activity	Staff Responsible	Target group (Audience, number)	Desired outcome



7. Getting Feedback

As your team puts the Team Nutrition plan into action, you may want to evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts. Evaluation need not be extensive or formal. You can use the results to refine and improve your program.

Here are some questions that can help you evaluate your Team Nutrition efforts.

As a result of Team Nutrition:

- Has your school district or school established a written nutrition policy?
- Has your school included nutrition in the curriculum or integrated nutrition into existing curricula in reading, writing, math, science and social studies?
- Have teachers spent more time teaching nutrition in a school year in grades pre-K-12?
- Has the student participation rate (average daily participation) in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs increased?
- Are more students willing to choose and eat a variety of foods offered in the school meal programs?
- Do more students choose and eat fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods offered in the school meal programs?
- Has your school purchased and served more vegetables and fruits?
- Has your school increased availability of healthy food choices and snack items on the school grounds during the lunch period and throughout the school day?
- Do your students have enough time to eat their meals (not counting the waiting time)?
- Do more teachers and foodservice staff receives nutrition education in-service training?
- Has the number of pre-K to grade 12 students who participate in daily physical education increased?
- Has the number of nutrition and physical activity events increased?
- Are more parents and community members involved in planning and carrying out Team Nutrition activities?
- Has the media coverage about Team Nutrition activities and events increased in your community?





8. Celebrate and Share Success

It is important to take time to celebrate successes with your team members and recognize their efforts. And remember to share your successful Team Nutrition ideas. If you set up a communication network with other schools or school districts, you will have an ongoing avenue for

sharing success stories and learning from each other. Participating at regional or State meetings is another way to share your experience—and gain from the experience and enthusiasm of others.



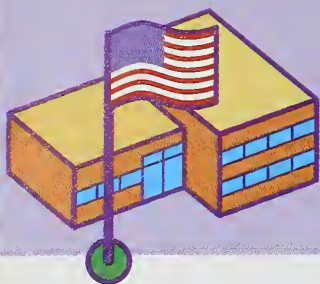
Keeping It Going

Once your school has made a commitment to Team Nutrition, taken the steps to get it started, and received some feedback on your efforts, you are ready to think about building on your foundation. This is true for schools that are new to Team Nutrition—as well as for those that were Team Nutrition pioneers.

Team Nutrition's strategy is based on the knowledge that children learn best by getting important information through repetition and reinforcement—where they live, learn, and play. That's why Team Nutrition delivers healthy eating and physical activity information, activities, and events through six channels: school, classroom, cafeteria, home, community, and media.

This section presents the challenges that Team Nutrition Demonstration Project States and schools faced as they worked through each of the channels—along with their strategies for meeting the challenges, examples of specific activities they developed, and materials that are available from USDA and its partners to help your school succeed in every area.





The School

Challenge: *“We don’t have the support we need, and there are inconsistent messages in the school.”*

The total school environment has a powerful influence on students in many areas, including healthy eating and physical activity. Working together, members of the school community can ensure that children get consistent nutrition and physical activity messages in and out of school and have opportunities to learn to make healthy choices. School administrators and board members, parents, local organizations, interested individuals, and State agencies can all contribute to achieving this goal.

School administrators and school board members influence and direct school policy. It is important that policy reflects an emphasis on nutrition and physical activity, along with other school issues that are critical to the well being of the students and their ability to learn. In making policy decisions, administrators often have to consider a variety of demands and priorities—which sometimes conflict with each other. School nutrition leaders may want to remind administrators how Team Nutrition helps them achieve many of their goals. Then they can suggest promoting students’ health and academic achievement by:

Making the total school environment a learning center for healthy eating and physical activity.

- ▶ Establish and follow a policy that addresses the whole school environment to promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- ▶ Incorporate Team Nutrition into existing school-wide educational initiatives and programs, such as the Coordinated School Health Program, School Improvement Plan, Character Education and others.

- ▶ Make sure vending machines, school stores or snack bars provide healthy snack options and that healthy foods are offered at school functions, including sports events.
- ▶ Allow sufficient time and a pleasant environment for students to eat meals comfortably.
- ▶ Provide time in the schedule for teachers to conduct nutrition activities or integrate nutrition curriculum in health, science, math, reading and writing, and social science lessons.
- ▶ Urge parent associations (PTA or PTO) and student clubs to sell healthy foods or non-food items for fundraising.
- ▶ Make school facilities available to community organizations for physical activity.
- ▶ Organize a school health or nutrition advisory council that meets on a regular basis to address nutrition and physical activity issues.

Supporting and promoting nutrition training for teachers and foodservice staff and assessing school nutrition programs on an on-going basis.

- ▶ Encourage foodservice staff to attend training provided by the State education agency that administers the Child Nutrition Programs.
- ▶ Urge teachers to take a nutrition course as part of their in-service training or certification renewal.

Parents and community members can contribute in creating a healthier school and community environment.

- ▶ Establish avenues whereby parents can share their positive eating practices with members of the school community.
- ▶ Look for ways to make changes in their own homes and communities that encourage healthy eating and physical activity.

- ▶ Join a school health or nutrition advisory council and speak to school administrators and board members about the importance of effective nutrition policies and programs.
- ▶ Encourage schools to offer the School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs and encourage students to participate.
- ▶ Write letters to the media about the importance of a healthy school environment.
- ▶ Urge administrators and board members to offer courses in nutrition, health, and physical education for students.

State agencies can support local schools' efforts by:

Providing leadership, resources and training to local Team Nutrition school leaders.

- ▶ Use e-newsletters or other means of communication to connect local Team Nutrition school leaders so they can share new materials and training opportunities.
- ▶ Serve as a clearinghouse for local Team Nutrition schools' ideas and best practices in nutrition education and physical activity.

- ▶ Provide training for Team Nutrition leaders, teachers, and foodservice staff on such topics as teambuilding, establishing goals and action plans, and communicating with the media.

Developing partnerships with other State agencies and organizations that address issues of child nutrition and health.

- ▶ Participate in a Statewide childhood obesity prevention or physical activity working group;
- ▶ Participate in a State Coordinated School Health Program task force;
- ▶ Participate in a State education agency curriculum work group;
- ▶ Participate in a State nutrition and physical activity coordinating committee; or,
- ▶ Participate in the Action for Healthy Kids State network team.
- ▶ Partner with policymakers and opinion leaders to develop policies that foster a healthy school environment.





School Ideas in Action

Here is a sample activity adopted from the Popular *Team Nutrition Events—An Idea Book* that describes how everyone can be involved in promoting a Team Nutrition message throughout the school.

Walking with the Principal: Students can get fit and have fun while they take part in a school-wide walking club led by their own school principal. This activity can take place at recess, mid-morning, mid-afternoon, after school or whatever time best fits the principal's and school routine. Here is how to get everyone involved:

Students and teachers – Math students can tally up the tracking cards and determine the number of miles the participants have walked collectively each week or month. Social studies students can trace the history of race-walking, and art teachers can help students create the mile markers and tracking cards.

Foodservice staff – School foodservice manager and staff members can offer a healthy drink or snack for the walkers and join the walking club themselves.

Parents – Parents too can join the walking club. They can help lay out and supervise the walking path, and distribute prizes and incentives.

Community members – Community members can join the walking club as well. You might ask local businesses and health-related organizations to sponsor the walkers for one month by donating small incentives such as water bottles, shoelaces, or a gift certificate to a sporting goods store for participants who walk 10 miles or more.

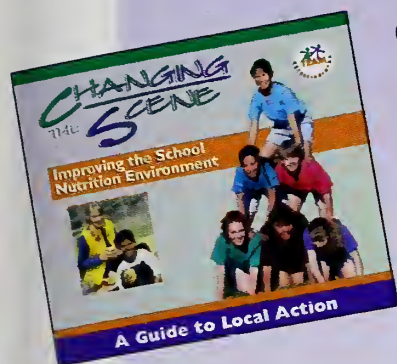
Local Media – Let the media know about Team Nutrition events. Ask them to conduct an interview and prepare a human-interest story for the newspaper or evening television news.

**Team Nutrition message:
Be physically active**



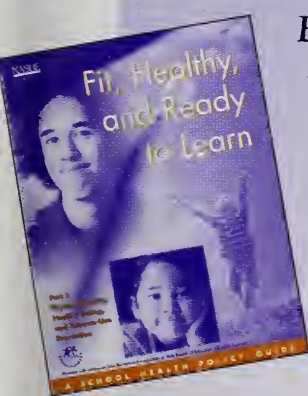
School Resources

Here are some resources that you and your team can use to create a healthier school environment.



Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment—A Guide to Local Action: This USDA Team Nutrition action kit is used at the State and local levels to

educate decision makers about the critical role a consistent, total school nutrition environment plays in promoting healthy eating. To order or download the kit, visit USDA's Team Nutrition Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/Changing.htm/>.



Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn: the National Association of State Boards of Education developed this school health policy guide. You can use Chapter E of the guide to help with developing your school's nutrition policies. Chapter E is also included in the USDA's *Changing the Scene* kit.

Healthy School Nutrition Environments: Promoting Healthy Eating Behaviors: The American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) call on schools and communities to recognize the health and educational benefits of healthy eating and the importance of making it a priority in every school. At the same time, the associations are encouraging their members to provide leadership in helping schools promote healthy eating for our Nation's children. You can download this material from

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/healthyeatingchallenge.html.

CDC Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating: These guidelines include recommendations for helping States, districts, and schools adopt health programs and policies that have proven most effective in promoting lifelong healthy eating among youth. You can download the guidelines from www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/publications/schoolguidelines.htm.

CDC Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People: These guidelines include specific recommendations to help States, districts, and schools implement health programs and policies that have proven most effective in promoting lifelong physical activity among youth. You can download these guidelines from www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/publications/schoolguidelines.htm.

Action for Healthy Kids – Action Planning Guide for State Teams: This guide was prepared in conjunction with the Healthy Schools Summit by multiple national organizations. It provides information on how to develop State-level action plans for creating a healthier school nutrition environment. You can download the guide from www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools/apg.htm.

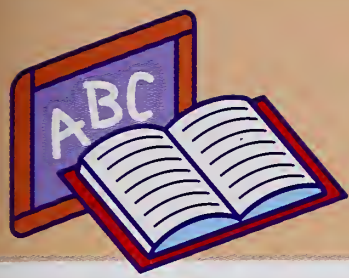
Making Health Academic – Action Steps: This publication was developed by the Academy for Educational Development, with support from CDC's Division for Adolescent and School Health. It reflects current resources in the fields of school health services, nutrition and physical education, and healthy school environments. You can download the publication from www2.edc.org/makinghealthacademic/concept/actionsenvironment.asp.

EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.™ This is a national nutrition education and promotion campaign for all of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service programs. It conveys science-based, behavior-focused and motivational messages about healthy eating and physical activity based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.™ uses a spokesperson Power Panther™ and other materials for delivering nutrition and physical activity messages to children and their caregivers. You may want to arrange for Power Panther™ to visit your school for a special Team Nutrition school-wide event. Order the materials at www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmart-playhard/.

Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity – Recommendations for Schools: This Web site provides information about childhood obesity and general suggestions for what schools can do to promote good nutrition and physical activity. www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.htm.

For more information about assessing your school's needs and creating a healthy school nutrition environment, visit USDA's Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/index.htm





The Classroom

Challenge: *"We can't add one more thing to our curriculum."*

Teachers need adequate classroom time to teach nutrition. One effective way to make the most of available instruction time is to integrate nutrition education into the existing curriculum, so that it is not a burdensome "add-on." Students have fun learning food and nutrition concepts when they are used as tools for teaching reading, writing, language arts, math, social sciences, health, and art.

Here are a few examples of how teachers, parents and foodservice staff can help promote healthy eating through classroom activities:

Teachers can:

- ▶ Make nutrition and physical activity a regular part of the curriculum and make it a priority, even if they start by spending just a few minutes each day discussing the lunch menus with students.
- ▶ Have a 5-to-10-minute stretch exercise with students once—or more—each day.
- ▶ Ask parents to provide healthy snacks for class parties.
- ▶ Avoid using food to reward students.
- ▶ Take part in nutrition training sessions during the certification renewal process, so teachers can relate nutrition to other classroom activities.
- ▶ Visit USDA's Team Nutrition Web site for educators' www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Educators/index.htm often to find integrated classroom nutrition education materials that are available on the Internet.

"Nutrition was taught in a variety of creative ways in the classroom."

— TN Demonstration Project School

- ▶ Invite parents who are nutrition or health professionals to come to the classroom and talk to students.
- ▶ Be a role model and join students for school meals from time to time.

Parents can:

- ▶ Provide healthy snacks for school and classroom parties and special events.
- ▶ Help classroom teachers plan and conduct nutrition education activities and events.

Foodservice staff can:

- ▶ Support classroom nutrition lessons with healthy food items for food demonstrations and tasting, if the budget permits.
- ▶ Coordinate and participate in activities with classroom and physical education teachers and other staff.

State education agencies, colleges and universities can:

- ▶ Provide teachers with nutrition education training as part of their preparation for teaching.
- ▶ Offer teachers who are involved in nutrition education adequate ongoing training that focuses on teaching strategies that help students change their behavior. Have the training approved for college credit.
- ▶ Work with State curriculum staff to ensure that nutrition is integrated into the Statewide standards of learning.
- ▶ Link extension educators with classroom teachers to help provide nutrition education.



Classroom Ideas in Action

This activity illustrates how nutrition can be integrated into the math, science, art, and language arts, and how students, parents, and foodservice staff can be involved in promoting Team Nutrition messages.

We Are What We Eat (a 1st and 2nd grade lesson adopted from the Team Nutrition *Food Time* elementary in-school curriculum.): This lesson asks children why they might choose a healthy diet. Children answer by outlining the benefits they could get from making healthy choices. Understanding the benefits may motivate them to evaluate their diets using the Food Guide Pyramid and to set goals for improvement. Teachers can lead discussions on the role of physical activity – like playing hard – in making them feel good. Here is how to get everyone involved in this nutrition learning activity:

Teachers and students - Teachers ask students to record the foods they eat over the course of a day; make a poster to show those foods; sort and chart the foods according to the Food Guide Pyramid; set goals to improve their diets (such as eat a fruit for snack instead of candy, and try a new food every week); and write a letter asking foodservice staff to visit the classroom and talk about healthy eating choices.

Team Nutrition messages: Eat a variety of foods, eat more fruits, vegetables and grains, and eat lower fat foods more often.

Students can look at the school lunch menu and categorize foods according to the food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid. They can tally the number of food items from each food group and see how the foods fit the pyramid. Teachers can link these activities to other important curriculum skills—recording data, counting and sorting, adding, writing and making a chart.

Parents - Parents can ask children to explain the Food Guide Pyramid to them; then parents and children can use the pyramid to plan meals and snacks at home.

Foodservice staff - Foodservice staff can volunteer to talk to students about how they use the pyramid to create balanced school meals. They can encourage children to use their pyramid posters to decorate the cafeteria.



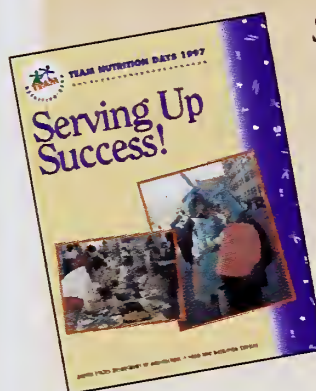
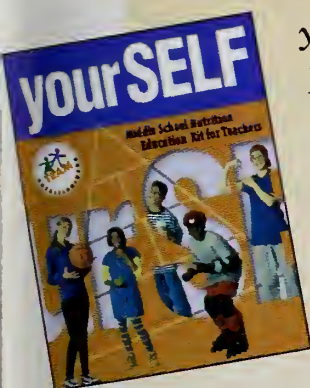
Classroom Resources

Team Nutrition provides curricula, posters and classroom materials that schools can use to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Following are examples of nutrition lessons and activities that the school curriculum director, principal or classroom teacher can incorporate into existing classroom instruction.

Elementary In-School Curriculum: USDA developed these activity-based modules to help children in grades PreK-5 build skills and make healthy eating choices. Each module contains a teacher's guide, resource materials, student magazines, posters, and take-home family newsletters and reproducible worksheets. Check out the current versions of the curriculum at USDA's Team Nutrition Web site www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/scholastic.html. To purchase the curriculum, call the National Food Service Management Institute: 1-800-321-3054 or visit the Web site www.nfsmi.org.



yourSELF Middle School Education Kit: This module helps students in grades 6 through 9 understand how their eating patterns and physical activity today can affect their health and the way they grow for years to come. You can download the kit at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/yourself.htm or purchase it from the National Food Service Management Institute – 1-800- 321-3054 or visit www.nfsmi.org to order.



Serving Up Success: Team Nutrition Schools are leading the way in conducting exciting activities that link the classroom and cafeteria, making nutrition education part of the entire school.

Download the publication from www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/serving.html.



Reader's Corner: This Web site lists books that children in grades preK-12 can read to learn about nutrition. See www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Students/Fun/Readers/index.html.

For more information, visit **Food and Nutrition Resources for Teachers at the Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC)** www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/educators.html.

and Visit **USDA's Team Nutrition Web site** at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Educators/index.htm.





The Cafeteria

Challenge: *“Meeting the nutritional requirements and getting the kids to actually eat what you serve is a challenge.”*

The cafeteria is an important learning center for students to practice healthy eating.

- More than 55 percent of young people in the U.S. get one of three meals from school meal programs each day.⁸
- Nearly 16 percent get two of their three meals at school.⁸
- For some young people, school meals are the only nutritious meals they get.

The foodservice manager and staff can educate children about nutrition—in the cafeteria and the classroom. The way they prepare and present meals and interact with children during mealtime can encourage children to make healthy food choices. Talking about nutrition and healthy eating, encouraging children to try new foods, and inviting students and teachers to tour the kitchen help children see nutrition as an important part of their school and learning experiences.

Foodservice staff can:

Provide meals with a variety of healthy foods that are tasty and appealing to students and that meet USDA nutrition standards and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For example:

- ▶ Offer a salad bar with a variety of fruit and vegetable choices. If you don't have the facilities to provide a salad bar, offer pre-packaged salads as an option.
- ▶ If the cafeteria offers a la carte sales, make healthy foods or snack items available at prices students can afford.
- ▶ Plan menus that reflect your students' taste and cultural preferences. Print the school menus, including the nutritive value information, and other nutrition tips on the school menu calendar or in the school newsletter that goes home to parents or post on the school Web site.
- ▶ Involve students and families in planning school menus and tasting new recipes and products.
- ▶ Market the school meal programs by inviting parents, teachers and community leaders to breakfast or lunch.



“Students tried new foods, had fun and they are eating better.”

— TN Demonstration Project School

Take part in professional development and be an active member of the professional team at your school.

- ▶ Participate actively in the State school foodservice organization and American School Food Service Association so you can network with foodservice professionals around the country.
- ▶ Participate in national, State or local training that relates to Child Nutrition Programs.
- ▶ Offer your nutrition expertise to teachers—volunteer to teach nutrition in the classroom.
- ▶ Visit USDA's Team Nutrition Web site often to stay up to date on the training and education materials that are available on line.

School administrators and board members can:

Ensure that the school cafeteria is a learning center for good nutrition behavior.

- ▶ Make sure students have enough time to eat in a safe and comfortable dining area.
- ▶ Discourage the sale of foods that are high in fat or high in sugar but low in nutrient value—in school meals, at snack time, and at fundraisers.
- ▶ Be a role model: select and eat balanced meals that are high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; and be physically active.
- ▶ Join students for school meals and promote the school meal programs.

Parents can:

Promote the school meal programs.

- ▶ Join your child for school meals once in a while and take an interest in what your child eats at school each day.
- ▶ Give foodservice managers suggestions for culturally appropriate, nutritious foods.
- ▶ Be a role model at home: select and eat balanced meals that are high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; and be physically active.





Cafeteria Ideas in Action

Here is an example of how the foodservice staff can take the lead in promoting good nutrition and getting students, parents, teachers, and the local community involved.

Creative Cookbook: This activity was adopted from USDA's *Serving up Success*. To encourage children and families to be part of your school's commitment to good nutrition, the school foodservice staff can sponsor creating a school cookbook filled with nutritious kid-tested recipes. It's a great way to find healthy recipes that can be modified and incorporated into school lunch menus and the cookbook can be used as a school fund-raiser. Each section of the cookbook can highlight a food group in the Food Guide Pyramid. This will help students recognize that the Food Guide Pyramid is a tool to help them eat properly every day. Here is how to get everyone involved in creating a cookbook:

Foodservice staff - Ask students, parents, teachers, and principals to submit recipes that are low in fat, low in sodium and low in added sugar. Use a software program to analyze the nutrient content of the recipes. Prepare some of the recipes and invite students to a tasting event to allow them to appreciate the taste, smell, touch, and sight of different foods.

Students and teachers - Actively involve students in submitting the recipes, creating artwork for the cookbook, making collages with food products or magazine pictures. Teachers can help students improve their writing skills for the cookbook and encourage classroom discussions about good nutrition.

Parents and community members - Ask parents to help their children gather recipes. Invite local chefs to demonstrate healthy cooking techniques; dietitians to talk about nutrition; artists to help students illustrate some of the recipes; farmers to explain where the ingredients come from before they get to the grocery store; and local printers to print the cookbook.

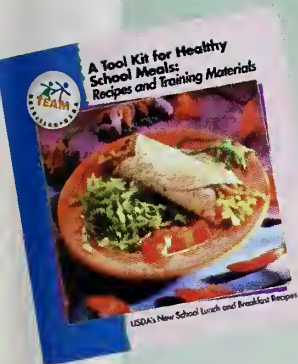
Then, student councils can sell the final cookbook as a fund-raiser.



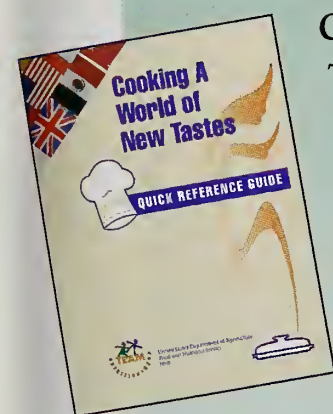
Team Nutrition messages: Eat a variety of foods, eat more fruits, vegetables and grains, and eat lower fat foods more often.

Foodservice Resources

Team Nutrition offers many resources to help the foodservice staff enhance their programs.



A Tool Kit for Healthy School Meals: Recipes and Training Materials: This kit includes 53 recipes that meet the Dietary Guidelines, a promotion guide and a training manual with instructions on preparing, modifying and standardizing recipes. Each recipe includes a nutrient analysis. The kit is available for purchase from the National Food Service Management Institute by calling 1-800-321-3054, or you can download it from USDA's Team Nutrition Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/toolkit.html.



Cooking a World of New Taste: This is a set of four training videos on healthy food production for school foodservice personnel. Videos and the accompanying guide feature USDA recipes and explore new approaches to producing healthy foods with an emphasis on developing culinary skills. You can purchase the set from the National Food Service Management Institute by calling 1-800-321-3054 or visit their Web site at www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html.



Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals: The Menu Planner educates school foodservice staff on the link between nutrition and health. This nutrition resource includes chapters on meeting the

Dietary Guidelines and nutrition goals, food-based menu planning and nutrient standards, nutrient analysis, and basic principles and processes of menu planning. The Menu Planner also includes information about how to promote the school meal programs. It is available from USDA upon request at Global change www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/menuplan_ner.html.

For more information on USDA's foodservice resources, visit USDA's Team Nutrition Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/index.htm and visit the Resource Café at the Healthy School Meals Resource System at http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Resource_cafe/index.html.

There are many additional foodservice resources also available for purchase at the National Food Service Management Institute. www.nfsmi.org/Information/Guide.html.

**National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
PO Drawer 188 - University,
MS 38677
Phone 800-321-3054
Fax 800-321-3061
www.nfsmi.org**





The Home

Challenge: *“Parents are too busy. They really don’t have the time or energy to get involved and interact with their children about healthy eating and physical activity.”*

Parents are the primary role models for children—they have the earliest and most critical influence on their children’s health behavior. There are many ways for parents to help reinforce the Team Nutrition messages children learn at school. Parents can choose the ones that best fit their schedules.

Parents can:

- ▶ Set the example for making healthy choices at home: prepare, serve and eat a variety of food—lots of vegetables, fruits and whole grains; and be physically active.
- ▶ Offer children a variety of healthy foods at mealtime, keep healthy snacks on hand, prepare and eat more meals at home, and make family mealtime an enjoyable experience.
- ▶ Involve children in selecting and preparing food at home.
- ▶ Share nutrition information with children and talk to them about their nutrition projects and homework assignments.
- ▶ Encourage children to be physically active. Help them choose appropriate physical activities that they will enjoy.
- ▶ Volunteer to help children’s sports teams and recreation programs.
- ▶ Play with children and join them in physical activity on a regular basis. Limit TV and video time at home.
- ▶ Provide a safe environment for physical activity. Teach children safety rules and make sure they have the clothing and equipment they need to participate safely.



Home Ideas in Action

Here is an example of a healthy eating activity for parents and children:

Sense-able Scavenger Hunt: This activity was adopted from USDA’s *Community Nutrition Action Kit*. Your local grocery store offers a wide variety of foods—different colors; different packages; and choices of fresh, frozen, store-prepared, and canned foods. Shopping with your child can be a fun learning activity.

For example, challenge your child to find “sense-able” foods that are smooth, strongly and mildly flavored, crunchy, cold, and foods that have a strong aroma. Write them down. When you get home, talk about the senses; then plan and prepare together a “sensible” meal for the family using the foods you have purchased.

Team Nutrition messages: Eat a variety of foods, eat more fruits, vegetables and grains, and eat lower fat foods more often.



Home Resources

Team Nutrition provides a variety of resources to help parents promote a healthy lifestyle with their children.

Fun Tips: Using the Dietary

Guidelines at Home: These easy-to-follow send-home tips on making use of the Dietary Guidelines are designed for parents to use with children. You can download this flyer at USDA's Team Nutrition Web site

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/funtips.html.

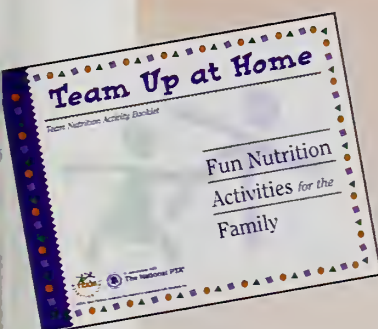


Making the Family Connection: These activities for parents and children are available for you to download at the USDA's Team Nutrition Web site www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Parents/familyconnection.html. Topics include building healthy meals and snacks, understanding the Nutrition Facts Label, supermarket sleuths, and others.

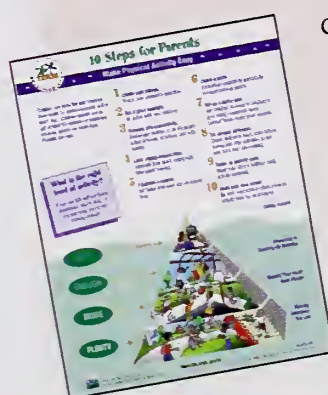
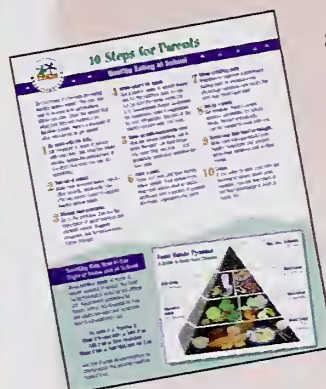
Team Up at Home—Team Nutrition Activity Booklet:

This is a collection of hands-on nutrition education activities for parents to use with their school-age children. The 20-

page activity booklet is in a reproducible format for community and classroom use. You can download it from USDA's Team Nutrition Web site www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/teamup-booklet.html. (This booklet is being revised.)



Ten Steps for Parents: This is a two-sided handout for parents. One side displays the Food Guide Pyramid and encourages parents to get involved in school meals. The other side displays an Activity Pyramid and encourages parents to help children make physical activity a part of their daily lives. You can download this information at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/ten-step-flyer.html.



For more information on materials for parents, go to USDA's Team Nutrition Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Parents/index.htm



The Community

Challenge: *“It takes time and effort to form community partnerships and actively involve community members in promoting Team Nutrition messages.”*

The community can create and sustain an environment that influences children’s attitudes and behaviors about nutrition and physical activity. Children need ongoing reinforcement—throughout the community—of the healthy lifestyle messages they get at home and at school. It is worth the effort to involve the community. One Team Nutrition Demonstration Project School reported that the community’s support ensured a successful Team Nutrition. Community members can be included in many ways.

Local business representatives can bring financial management expertise to the team and can help generate resources by donating money, food, supplies and manpower to support school and community nutrition events and activities.

- ▶ Ask local business owners to donate fitness-related prizes for a Team Nutrition field walk—such as jump ropes, sun visors, shoelaces, or water bottles.
- ▶ Plan a field trip to a farmers’ market to look at the locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables and try some samples or invite a local produce farmer or gardener to talk to the class.
- ▶ Ask community organizations to provide information for families about local programs that encourage physical activity and a healthy lifestyle—such as YMCA or YWCA events, community education classes, local parks programs, walking clubs, and others.

School board members, city council members or the mayor can influence funding and policy decisions and strengthen community support for good nutrition.

- ▶ Visit government leaders to discuss the importance of providing consistent nutrition and fitness messages for children in schools and throughout the community. Partner with them to develop policies that support healthy behaviors.

Dietitians, school nurses, and extension educators, and health and nutrition professionals can provide expertise and professional connections in the community and help promote healthy eating and physical activity.

- ▶ Ask the health and nutrition professionals in health-related agencies, such as the County Extension Office or local office of the American Cancer Society, to participate in a “Family Food and Fun Night” at school. Or invite them to display healthy snacks or lunch items at school events like parent-teacher nights and to be there to discuss parental concerns.

State and local authorities can provide more community-based opportunities for recreational physical activity for children and families.

- ▶ Talk to State and local authorities about the availability of safe parks, public swimming pools, hiking and biking trails, and other places for children and families to enjoy physical activity.
- ▶ Compile and publicize a list of existing facilities that provide safe and affordable opportunities for physical activity in the community.
- ▶ Partner with school administrators to make school physical activity facilities available to the community beyond school hours.



Community Ideas in Action

Here is an example of how to translate a Team Nutrition message into an event that involves students and the entire community.

Walkin' the Walk: This activity was adopted from USDA's *Community Nutrition Action Kit*. "Put on your walking shoes, come along and join the fun... a 5-mile walk through your neighborhood community" is a great way to accomplish many goals. You can promote participation in a lifetime physical activity—walking; increase awareness of the relationships between nutrition, physical activity, and better health; and raise funds to support a local community food distribution project for the needy. Here is how to get everyone involved:

Students and teachers - Teachers can help students prepare and distribute flyers, create radio announcements, develop a design to mark the walk-a-thon route. Students and teachers can also participate in Walkin' the Walk.

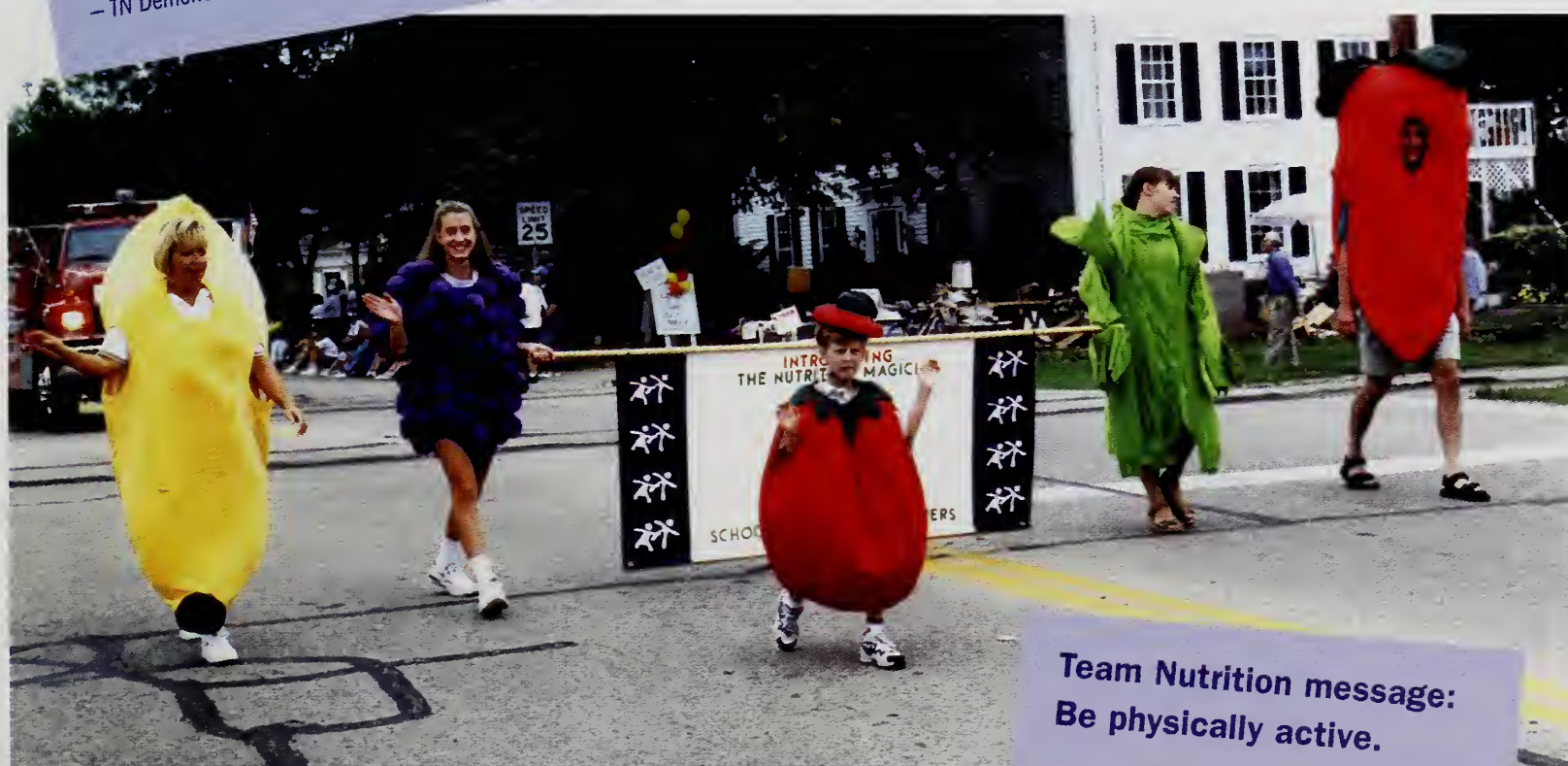
Parents and community members - Encourage everyone in the community to participate in Walkin' the Walk. Organize a committee to call other schools and community organizations to publicize the walk. Volunteer to organize the event by planning the walking route and obtaining all necessary permits, and contacting local businesses, civic groups and community agencies to become partners or sponsors.

Foodservice staff - Staff can participate in the walk. They can also prepare and serve snacks and water.

Media representatives - Contact local media to let them know about the event. Invite local celebrities, educators, and outstanding students to serve as honorary chairs of the activity. They will attract media attention.

"Students tried new foods, had fun and they are eating better."

— TN Demonstration Project School

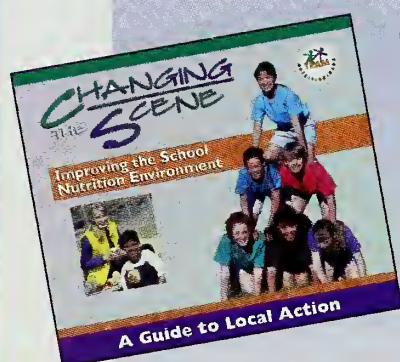


Team Nutrition message:
Be physically active.



Community Resources

CDC Kids Walk- to- School Program: This program encourages increasing the daily physical activity of children by mobilizing communities to create safe routes; encouraging children to walk and bicycle to and from school; and focusing on the importance of regular physical activity for children, pedestrian safety, and healthy and walkable community environments. Visit CDC's Kids Walk to School Program at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm.



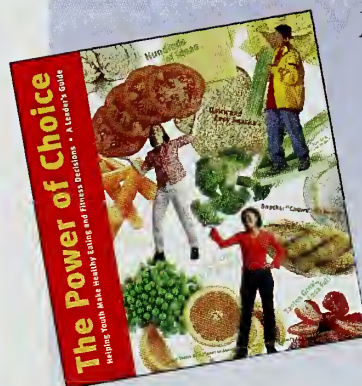
**Changing the Scene:
Improving the School
Nutrition Environment—A
Guide to Local Action:**

This USDA Team Nutrition action kit is used at the State and local lev-

els to educate decision makers about the critical role a consistent, total school nutrition environment plays in promoting healthy eating. To order or download the kit, visit USDA's Team Nutrition Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.htm.

For more information on community resources, visit USDA's Team Nutrition Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/index.htm.

The Community Nutrition Action Kit: This is a tool to help communities motivate children and families to create healthy eating and physical activity patterns. It was the result of a one-year collaborative effort among several agencies within USDA: Families, 4H and Nutrition of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion; and the Food and Nutrition Service. You may download the kit at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/cnak.html.



Power of Choice: This series of fun, hands-on nutrition-related activities build on themes found in the *yourSELF* Kit. It was developed for adult leaders who work with pre-teens (ages 11 to 13) in

after-school settings sponsored by local community organizations. To order, go to USDA's Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/power_of_choice.html.



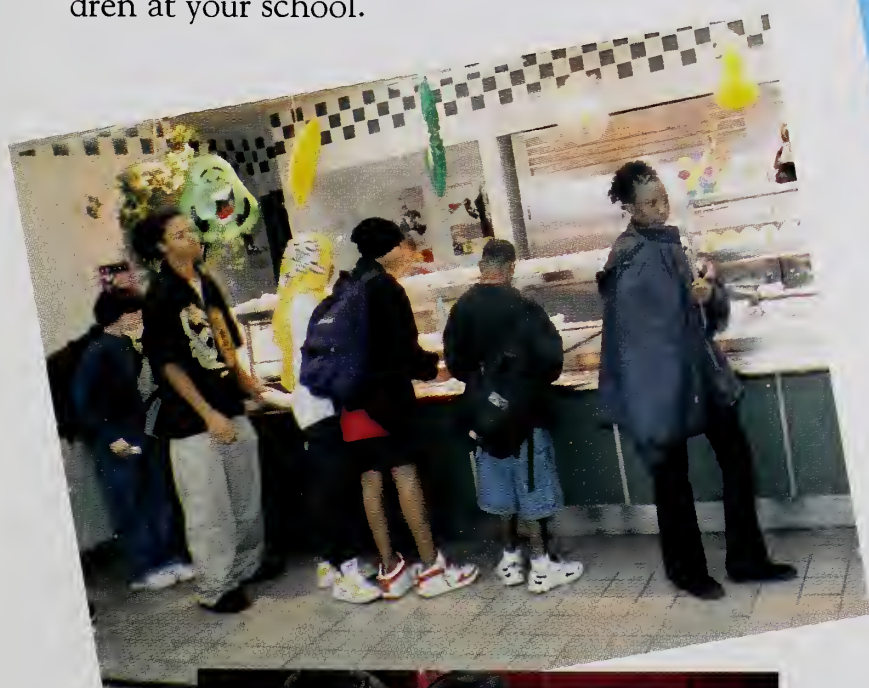


The Media

Challenge: “Getting the media’s attention to promote Team Nutrition messages is a challenge.”

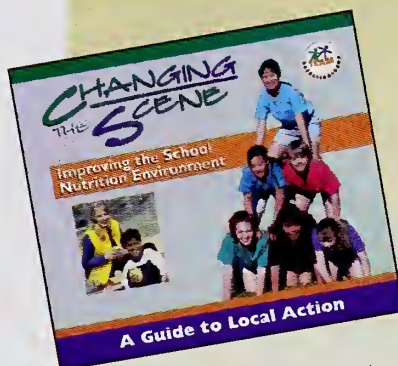
Local media can bring nutrition messages to the community, reinforce what the children are learning in school and at home, and increase public support for a healthy school and community environment. Even the smallest newspaper or radio station will get messages out to hundreds more people than you could ever reach in person.

Check to see if anyone on the team—or any other school member—has media contacts. A personal connection can help you get started. Also, if you can tie your nutrition message to something currently happening in the community, you may create more interest among the media. For example, if the media is focusing on the issue of overweight kids, showcase an event like a power-walk club for children at your school.



Media Resources

To help you deal with media:



Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment: “The Media” section in this kit includes sample media releases, tips for talking to media and

tips for TV appearances. It is

available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/media.html.



Getting Your Message Out: A Media Guide for Promoting Team Nutrition: This guide is a

compilation of material previously developed for two other Team Nutrition publications:

Changing the Scene, and *Get Growing...from the Ground Up*. This publication consolidates

media information for easy reference and use and supports the Team Nutrition communication channel - media events and coverage.

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/.



TEAM NUTRITION MESSAGES:

- ▶ Eat a variety of foods,
- ▶ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and grains
- ▶ Eat lower fat foods more often and
- ▶ Be physically active.

Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in improving the health of America's children. We hope this guide and the many other resources Team Nutrition provides will help you translate your interest into ideas and your ideas into action. Start with simple, do-able, fun activities that deliver one or more of the four Team Nutrition messages in the school and community and get everyone involved and excited. Share the work, share the recognition, and share the reward of watching our children reach their full potential.



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⁸ National Databank, FNS/USDA, U.S. Summary FY 2001.

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Participating School Districts (ID):

Boundary County
Coeur d'Alene
Glenns Ferry
Nampa
Minidoka
St. Edwards
Aberdeen
American Falls
Pocatello
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DeWitt

Coralville Central
Elementary, Coralville

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Davenport

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Burlington

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Lansing

North Iowa Elementary,
Buffalo Center

Panorama Elementary,
Panora

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Middle, Burlington

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Sublette

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Summerfield

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